

bohemianism; and here and in even more Olympian circles he made rapid headway from the first. He had all the qualities that enable a man to shine in such an atmosphere : he was by instinct a social artist, as his earliest novels prove ; in those days dandyism was in fashion, and he was a dandy by nature, practice, and conviction ; he was ' at that time a very handsome young man, with a countenance in which beauty of feature and intellectual expression were strikingly combined'¹; and he could when he liked be so brilliant in conversation as to extort admiring testimony even from unsympathetic listeners.

To Sarah Disraeli.

Feb. 21, 1833.

Yesterday I dined with the Nortons; it was her eldest brother's birthday, who, she says, is 'the only respectable one of the family, and that is because he has a liver complaint.' There were there her brother Charles and old Charles Sheridan, the uncle, and others. The only lady beside Mrs. Norton, her sister Mrs. Blackwood,² also very handsome and very Sheridanic. She told me she was nothing. 'You see Georgy's the beauty, and Carry's the wit, and I ought to be the good one, but then I am not.' I must say I liked her exceedingly; besides, she knows all my works by heart, and spouts whole pages of 'V. G.' and 'C. F.' and the 'Y. D.' In the evening came the beauty, Lady St. Maur, and anything so splendid I never gazed upon. Even the handsomest family in the world, which I think the Sheridans are, all looked dull. Clusters of the darkest hair, the most brilliant complexion, a contour of face perfectly ideal. In the evening Mrs. Norton sang and acted, and did everything that was delightful. Ossulston came in — a very fine singer, unaffected and good-looking. Old Mrs. Sheridan — who, by the bye, is young and pretty, and authoress of *Carwell* — is ray greatest admirer; in fact, the whole family have a very proper idea of my merits ! and I like them all.³

Many years later Lady Dufferin gave a description of the appearance presented at this dinner party by her

¹ Sir Henry Layard in the *Quarterly Review* for Jan., 1889.

² Afterwards Lady Dufferin. ³ *Letters*, p. 80.